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aries. After having judged the productions of the eighteenth century, he concludes with something of satire in the last clause : —

“In the nineteenth century the poet speaks in his own name of all that he has felt in the different periods of his life ; — of his pains and pleasures, hopes and regrets, the impressions left on him by great events, and the beauties of nature, love, and enthusiasm, the temptations of doubt, dreamings, and disenchantments, — all that has passed through the soul of René, — René, the type of personal poetry, the eldest of that noble family that continues him, not by imitation, but because melancholy is the natural state of the master-minds of the nineteenth century.”

ART. VII. — *Poems*. By MATTHEW ARNOLD. A New and Complete Edition. Boston : Ticknor and Fields. 1856. 18mo. pp. 336.

THIS volume of freighted verse — precious with costly experience, breathing deep passion and lofty wisdom, and finished in forms of severe beauty — has been six years before the American public without attracting extensive notice. But if the rare poems which compose its contents have not won a large recognition from miscellaneous readers, they have secured profound, admiring, and grateful attention from a select circle of the best judges of literary merit. Here and there, since

“ It is the law of bush and stone,
That each can only take his own,”

the more marked pieces of this collection have found their way to persons of a deep nature and a refined culture, who know them by heart, and who never tire of recalling and repeating the rich, pathetic lines.

Matthew Arnold had the happy fortune to have the great and good Thomas Arnold, of Rugby School, for his father ; and, as we gather his character from his published works, he is not unworthy of parentage so noble. In connection with the scholarly, consecrated, generous, manly spirit expressed

in the writings of both, we think of the Ode in which Pindar, celebrating the glory of Hippocleas, victor at the Pythian Games, praises him because he has emulated his deceased father, Phricias, who before him was a conqueror in the Olympic Stadium. The Professor of Poetry at Oxford University shows, in the elaborate Prefaces to the present volume, in his Tragedy of Merope, and in his three Oxford Lectures on the Translation of Homer, such remarkable critical powers, such thorough instruction in his department, such conscientious care in statement, and such vigorous and copious command of balanced thought, as give real value and importance to what he writes. His best poems have a certain powerful simplicity of form, a crystal clearness of phrase, an intensity of emotion, associated with and governed by comprehensive reflection, a pervading air of originality, and a direct honesty of aim and method, which are as interesting as they are rare. His poetry betrays a profound sympathy with man in its tone, and with nature in its imagery. As we read it, we seem ever to feel the land and sea under it, the freshness of the breeze and the pangs of humanity in it, and the blue sky bending over it. "The Strayed Reveller," "The Church of Brou," "The Scholar Gypsy," "Self-Dependence," "The Future," "The Sick King in Bokhara," "Memorial Verses," "Resignation," "To a Gypsy Child by the Sea-shore," "Obermann," "The Buried Life," "The Youth of Nature," "The Youth of Man," "A Summer Night," are worthy a high place among the best products of the English Muse in any age. The weight of mind, the earnestness of character, the sincerity and strength of feeling, the purity and power of expression, which they show to belong to their author, must rank him in the class of great poets, even should he never print a line more. We have that respect for his genius which makes us always eager to read whatever he publishes, and that confidence in his steady growth with years, which will lead us to watch his future career in authorship with deep interest.

Instead of reviewing the Poems of Mr. Arnold with the particularity they deserve, we propose to discuss with our readers the origin and uses of poetical literature.

Every emotion or thought, on reaching a certain pitch of intensity, seeks a vent through some channel of expression. The most adequate vent is an *action*, aiming to adjust the organism with the exigency. Thus, hunger expresses itself in the appropriation of food; hatred, in the infliction of violence; terror, in flight. When the inner impulse is not strong enough to embody itself in an act of fruition, or is kept from such an act by baffling circumstances, it may expend itself in gesture, which is an imitative or substitutional representation of the real act. For instance, a hater restrained from smiting his enemy may scowl, set his teeth, make a lunge into empty space, and thus work off in mimetic gestures the nervous energy kept from its legitimate discharge in an actual blow. Another vent for inward experience is language. Human emotions or thoughts may then be expressed, first, in fulfilling deeds; secondly, in symbolic gestures; or, thirdly, in verbal signs, oral or written.

The fine arts are modes of language, whose aim is to eternalize the experience of man,—the painter, sculptor, musician, respectively employing the resources of color, form, and sound to express human feelings and ideas. The literary artist seeks the same end by means of *words*, the most complete instrumentality given to any of the arts, the breathing organ of thought. The other arts can only hint thoughts; but words utter them as articulate coins immediately stamped and dropped from the mint of the mind. No brush, chisel, or lute can directly impart such ideas and emotions, so laden with meaning and pathos, as are instantaneously conveyed by the simple *words* friendship, love, home, farewell, mother, eternity, God. The author, therefore, is the most mightily equipped of all those artists whose mission it is, by primarily expressing, secondarily to rekindle and nourish the experience of the human soul.

A language, in order to express one's emotions and thoughts in signs which his fellows can recognize, is a necessity for man as a social being. Else he were destitute of sympathy, shut up in a hopeless and eternal solitude. Provision is made for this necessity in the audible reactions of the mind through the vocal organs. As soon as visible equivalents are

invented for these audible symbols of experience, literature commences. Literature is the visibly registered experience of man, and its birth is provided for in the fundamental necessity of his social relations, and in the primitive structure of his individual constitution. Poetry is a peculiar department within the general province of literature. The characteristics which distinguish poetic from other literary products are important. Yet few persons, we imagine, if called on, would be able to define them with accuracy and clearness. Let us make the attempt.

For our present purpose, all literature may be arranged under four titles, — science, history, philosophy, poetry. Science perceives and classifies objects, relations, and changes as they really are. History collects and records occurrences as they actually took place. Philosophy inquires into the causes and laws of things as they operate in the real order of nature, and endeavors to construct a coherent theory of what appears. Scientific, historic, and philosophic literature, then, seek to give verbal registry to the actual material and life of the world, as they are in themselves and in their causes, without abatement or addition. But poetry is creation, the building of literary fabrics out of matter at least partially fictitious. With the objects and events embodied in its descriptions, poetry mixes the energies and the colors of the mind. The scientific man sets forth the cold form of an actual object; the poet, Pygmalion-like, transfuses the dead marble with a soul. The historian shapes the stuff of his narrative into the dry likeness of truth; the poet makes it move and glow. The philosopher, gray “speculation in those eyes which he does glare with,” gropes in meditation, with tentative hypotheses, to grasp the dynamic determinations of motive and end between which all things proceed; the poet, careless altogether of the spectral domain of metaphysics, embraces the living appearances of things as they approach, and sheds a transfiguring radiance and warmth over them from his own beholding emotion. History looks for the coexistences and sequences of phenomena; science, for the connections of phenomena; philosophy, for the causes of phenomena; while poetry, in its purity, is itself the spon-

taneous producer of phenomena. History describes, science groups, philosophy explains, poetry creates.

In a word, the matter-of-fact man portrays a thing as it is in itself, so far as his impoverishing vision sees it; the poet portrays it as it appears in the excited mind, with magnifying enrichments of hue, proportion, and feeling. We once saw the full moon rise out of the ocean, and hang, for a moment, broadly poised on the edge of the dark waste of waters, when suddenly a ship, with sails all spread, far out at sea, passed solemnly across it, seeming, as it passed, a perfect picture stamped upon the gleaming disk. So poetry sets its lucid and beautifying mirror behind the objects it exhibits, lending to them a distinctness and a glory not their own. Other forms of literature aim to reflect the universe as it lies in the simple, white light of truth; poetry shows it to us through the many-colored prism of the imagination.

When the reactions of our minds are in equilibrium with the actions of objects and events, if any literary products result, they will be historic; that is, statements of experience in accordance with the facts of the case. When the reactions are excessive, the exuberance, or fictitious matter furnished by the mind, joined with the outward truth, forms a poetic product. The overflow of thought and feeling, which finds nothing external to react upon, must create something. The surplus mental energy, if nature furnishes no mould, will harden in its own shape, will constitute an original product, will forcibly print its die on whatever matter is first offered to it. Byron says, "*Poesy is to create from over-feeling* good or ill." But absolute creation is the prerogative of God alone. Accordingly, in the instances of its superabundant reactions there are two devices to which the poetic mind has recourse to dispose of its unappropriated energy. Since it cannot strictly create new things, it virtually does this by filling inanimate things with the spirit of life. This is the great characteristic of the mind overcharged with spiritual force, whether love, faith, or terror. The enthusiastic lover trans-fuses all nature with the presence of his beloved. The intensely believing fantasy of the Greek saw the landscape alive with Dryads, Naiads, Oreads. The murderer starts at

the rustle of a leaf, sees the ghost of his victim shaking his gory lock at him, shudders at voices in the air. The brain, oppressed and tingling with its deranged psychical equilibrium, discharges its profuse and uneasy batteries into whatever objects are brought into relation with it, and thus makes them participate in its own state. This is the poetic process, in distinction from the scientific, philosophic, or historic. Inadequate to pure creation, as a substitute it represents lifeless materials in vivified and conscious forms.

The other device to which the poetic spirit has recourse is *association*, making objects and events emblematic of something beyond themselves. Science dissects things, groups them by themselves as dry facts, and presents them in detached isolation; poetry collects and fuses things, weaves over them a vascular web of emotional relationship, and presents them in mysterious union, each wearing a vague fringe of beauty, and all swathed in a trailing cloud of meaning beyond what is expressed. This characteristic goes to the inmost root of the distinction between science and poetry, namely, that while in the statement of the former each fact stands distinct and self-sufficing, in that of the latter it is robed in a cloudy halo of emblematic association and suggestion. Notice the following instance. A woman opens a book, finds a withered leaf in it, and sheds tears. That is an historic series of facts. Now see how the poet, by his statement of these facts, makes them breathe with life, and carry in their emblematic background and margin a whole story of experience not stated. "I have an old aunt. She has an old book, in which there is pressed an old leaf plucked by hands long since withered. Turning the pages of the old book one day, when the old aunt sees that faded leaf, what ails her that she weeps so violently?"

The poet sees and feels so profoundly and widely, the sensitive and tenacious tentacles of his imagination are so numerous and so far-reaching, that, when any earnest experience goes forth, it carries symbolic meanings, tearing off and bearing along with itself fringes of association that interpenetrate mechanical forms with spirit, and load insignificant facts with eternal truth and awful prophecy. Each trite object stands for something besides itself, and bears a burden of admonish-

ing suggestion to pierce the soul. Thus Jones Very, contemplating that most mechanical and prosaic thing, a railroad, and seeing how it marches straight on its course, lowering down, lifting up, thrusting aside, whatever would divert or impede it, in a lofty mood of inspiration, addresses it in these electrifying lines : —

“Thou great proclaimer to the outward eye
Of what the spirit too would seek to tell,
Onward thou go'st, appointed from on high,
The other warnings of the Lord to swell.
Thou art the voice of one that through the world
Proclaims, in startling tones, ‘Prepare the way!’
The lofty mountain from its seat is hurled,
The flinty rocks thine onward march obey, —
The valleys, lifted from their lowly bed,
O’ertop the hills that on them frowned before ;
Thou passest where the living seldom tread,
Through forests dark where tides beneath thee roar,
And bid'st man's dwelling from thy track remove,
And wouldst with warning voice his crooked paths reprove !”

In this marvellous instance we see the creative spirit of poetry converting even a railroad into a living and flaming prophet of God.

The two peculiarities that fundamentally distinguish poetic verse from scientific prose are rhythm and metaphor. The original nature and function of these chief elements of poetry must be illustrated, for an accurate understanding of the subject we have in hand. Rhythm is a natural product of our organization ; metaphor is an instinctive artifice. Both are natural results of mental excitement and richness, and from their union poetry is born. Let us see if these statements cannot be made clear.

All the functions of our being are sustained by the assimilation and consumption of matter and force. The performance of any act implies the accumulation and expenditure of the power by which it is performed. Now all these movements of nutrition and waste, as the laws of physiology demonstrate, are intermittent and measured,—work not in continuous flow, but in pulses. When the nervous force, expended in gestures, is so profuse as to secure a regularly recurring discharge, the

man, as we see among savage tribes, breaks into measured movements, and the dance is born. Dancing, music, and poetry, under prepared conditions, are equally products of overstimulus. The origin of metrical utterance is, that in such instances the excitement expressed in words is so profound that it sweeps in the rhythmic bases and processes of the organism. Our life, both physical and spiritual, consists of time-regulated deposits of nutrition and discharges of energy. When the verbal utterance catches up or gears into this metrical movement, we have *verse*, which is distinguished from *prose* by its regularity of accentuation. Then pulse after pulse of mind-force beats in parallelisms and rhymes, as rocket after rocket is flung from the successive explosions of the mortar. This principle pervades nature : —

“ For the world was built in order,
And the atoms march in tune ;
Rhyme the pipe, and Time the warder,
Cannot forget the sun, the moon.
Come, lift thine eyes to lofty rhymes,
Of things with things, of times with times,
Primal chimes of light and shade,
Of sound and echo, man and maid.
Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
Or dip thy paddle in the lake,
But it carves the bow of beauty there,
And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake.”

The sentiment of the metre is simply the measure of the inner movements of passion. We recognize the light “ trochaic run of eagerness,” the “ sharp iambic stroke of invective,” the “ slow molossic tread of grief,” the resistless anapestic onset of martial valor, the dull spondaic drag of solemnity or depression. The tendency to metrical utterance is perceptible, even in prose, in proportion to the degree of excitement. Oratory always grows lyrical as it grows impassioned and majestic ; the blows of utterance beat time to the mighty throbs of the aroused and upheaving heart. Verse economizes the mental force required to follow a train of thought or emotion, by allowing it regular rests. An intermitted sound can be attended to without uneasiness much longer than a continuous one. Every person knows the fa-

tiguing effect of droning monotony on one extreme, and of spasmodic efforts on the other, and the avoidance of exhaustion secured by regularity of exertion and rest. Thus the blacksmith swings his sledge all day, the muscles regaining in each interval what they spent in the previous blow. Thus a march is incomparably less tiresome than a walk, and a man can go much farther keeping locked step with the thunder-tread of an army than he can in an irregular straggle. The recurrent succession of mental pausing and grasping, the looking for and leaning on the measured intervals and rhymes, sustain attention by regularly relieving it, and give to poetic composition that intensity of emphasis which prose vainly strives to reach. For instance, how much more effective is the sentiment, "There is no better time for a man to die, than when he falls a sacrifice for the good of humanity," when put into poetry thus: —

"Or on the gallows high,
Or in the battle's van,
Man's noblest time to die
Is when he dies for man!"

The other leading element of poetry, besides rhythm, is metaphor. Sift the origin, nature, and use of metaphoric language to the bottom, and you will find it to be a spontaneous device of the mind to give expression to its copious excitement, when the immediate objects of its experience do not of themselves furnish a sufficient vent, by associating with those objects, in a sort of living union, such other stimulative objects as can be brought into imaginative relation with them. For instance, a man of sensitive nature, seeing a solitary cloud floating, in the height of the sky, below the stars, and unable to express in a literal description of the fact all the emotion engendered in him by the scene, says, "One snowy cloud hangs like an avalanche of frozen light on the peak of Night's blue Alp." He associates and identifies with the naked matter of fact a group of other beautiful and sublime objects, and by means of the whole gigantic and gorgeous mass of imagery he pours out his full heart. Thus whenever the direct objects of the soul's experience do not afford an adequate stimulus and outlet for its thought and

fervor, the imagination intuitively reaches abroad, and grasps and fuses together whatever facts or phenomena have before been the fullest and freest channels of its emotions. Every object is then related with others sublimer than itself, every word is arrayed in a penumbra of symbolism, and so the profusion of mental force escapes. Byron, describing an innocent maiden of the South Sea Islands emerging from her ocean bath, illustrates this augmenting effect of association when he says,

“Naked in faith and feeling as in form,
She stood as stands the rainbow in a storm.”

The basis and import of allegory demand the same exposition. The thought of persons and their actions is accompanied by more feeling, makes a deeper impression, and seeks a stronger expression, than the thought of abstract ideas and their relations. Therefore the author who wishes to express his conceptions so as to awaken the keenest interest in his reader, instead of employing a series of abstract phrases, personifies them and depicts them in living movement. This is the original secret of all metaphor, which is the effort of the imagination to secure a more vivid stimulus and a broader and deeper channel for thought and emotion. “The orator,” as Emerson says, “bred amid country scenes, does not lose their lesson in the roar of cities or the broil of politics. Long after, in public agitation and terror, in the hour of revolution, these solemn images reappear in their morning lustre as fit symbols of the thoughts which the passing events awaken. At the call of a noble sentiment, again the woods wave, the pines murmur, the river rolls and shines, and the cattle low upon the mountains as he saw and heard them in his youth. And with these forms, the spells of persuasion and the keys of power are put into his hands.”

Every man is keyed to some measure, set to some tune. Whenever a passion adequate to that measure strikes him, or a mood up to the level of that tune possesses him, he breaks into music and song. The poet is a man whose sensibility is so keen and rich, whose faculty of expression is so quick and copious, that he easily overflows into wealthy and beautiful verse.

Having thus seen the origin and nature of poetry, it now remains to set forth its uses. Its first use is to give relief and pleasure to the soul by a fit expression of what stirs, burns, and crowds within it. What all dumbly feel, the poet feels so powerfully as to compel an utterance; and he is so gifted as to secure for it a melodious and beautiful utterance, which imparts sensations of ease and joy not merely to himself, but to every one who appreciates it. The enjoyment of a felicitous and full expression of its experience, confronting it again as in a mirror, is one of the purest and most massive pleasures of the mind. The reader who has ever known that slight, vague melancholy, more sweet than bitter, so familiar to tender and pensive natures, must derive a thrill of commingled surprise and satisfaction from the exquisite embodiment it has obtained in Longfellow's lines:—

“The feeling of sadness and longing
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.”

Many a man has often felt what no man has ever so well uttered as the author of *Childe Harold*:—

“Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,—could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe, into one word,
And that one word were lightning, I would speak.
But, as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.”

Poets are persons of more affluent and susceptible natures, more truly *men*, than other men; and symbolizing their experience in the choicest words, they reveal man to himself. No small portion of the astonishment and delight we derive from the works of the poets arises from recognizing there in clear expression the glorified shapes of what we had obscurely felt, in the most secret and sacred shrines of our being, and had thought peculiar to ourselves. Poetry would be amply justified had it no other use than to give pleasurable

vent to the yearning experience of the soul. He is no genuine poet who needs a motive beyond this, as is well illustrated by the following apologue, the substance of which we borrow from a poem by Charles Mackay.

Two nightingales, who had long filled the woods with melody, once sat silent for a moment, when one said to the other: "I am weary of singing all night to these dull boughs, and the heedless moon and stars, with none to listen to my notes and call them beautiful. I will fly to the city, and there lift my voice till the enraptured crowd pause and praise me." The other one said: "Amid these oaks and hills and streams I am happy to sing, because my breast is full. My song is an effluence of joy and worship. If men listen and are pleased, I am glad; if they heed not, none the less happy am I in singing." The ambitious one, scorning his contented brother, flew to the city and alighted on the market, and all day long, in the smoke and dust and roar, he poured his glorious strains of music. But the multitude were absorbed in toil, pleasure, and rivalry, and no man listened to him. Disappointment soon rankled into hate, and he fled back to his solitude and sang no more. Angry with himself and with the world, he soon died, and left no mourner. But the other one, who, inspired by beauty and love, gratitude and joy, stayed happy in the woods, and sang only from the fulness of his breast, still continued to entrance the night with his unpremeditated notes. The weary cotter often lingered to listen to his song, and felt that it was beautiful, and students and lovers, who wandered there, loved nature the more because this bird had sung.

The second function of the poet is to reproduce in the soul of the reader his own experience. All literary products are mental pemmican, or the concentrated nutriment of consciousness; poetry emphatically so, because the poetic temperament most profoundly feels, and the poetic faculty most effectively represents, the realities of experience. The utterer of beautiful and sublime sentiments, even in conversation, still more in oratory, awakens beautiful and sublime echoes in the breasts of his hearers. But

“ The finer thoughts, the thrilling sense,
The electric blood with which their arteries run,
Their body’s self-turned soul with the intense
Feeling of that which is, and fancy of
That which should be,”

enable *poets* more powerfully than any other authors to summon up in their readers the states of consciousness that exist in themselves. We read that an English nobleman once, as he sat ruminating an unjust vengeance which he had determined to take on an enemy, by chance opened a volume of Shakespeare, and fell on the lines,

“ Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted ” ;—

and such was the holy impulse created by the words, that he immediately abjured his evil purpose. A recent traveller among the nomadic people of Northern Asia describes an interesting adventure which befell him, and which is pertinent to our present train of remark.

“ I found the chief, like a patriarch, sitting at the door of his tent, surrounded by his family, his poet in front singing the great deeds of his race. He rose to receive me, gave me a seat on his own carpet, and bade the bard continue his song. The family group, the glowing sky, the vast plain with the thousands of animals scattered over it, formed a complete picture. Homer himself was never listened to with more attention than this shepherd poet. When he sung of their mountain scenes, their pastoral habits, their flocks and herds, the faces of his hearers were calm, and they sat motionless. But when he began to recite their warlike deeds, their eyes flashed with delight ; and as he proceeded, they were worked into a passion, and some grasped their battle-axes and sprang upon their feet. Then followed a mournful strain, telling of the death of a chief ; when all excitement ceased, and every one listened with breathless attention.”

The workings of the soul of this half-barbaric bard were reflected and echoed in the souls of his auditors. So is it, only on a nobler scale, with those great poets whose marvellous sensibility and skill, assimilating and creative powers, grasp all truth and beauty, hold all the heights and depths of human thought and feeling, embody their experience in their

writings, and impart the same to every appreciative reader. This is the second use of poetry, to enrich the impoverished multitudes of beneficiary mankind with the ideal wealth of the great millionnaires of soul.

In the third place, it is the miraculous prerogative of literature in general, of poetry in especial, to translate all nature, life, and experience into their verbal equivalents, and to preserve them, embalmed in a sort of intellectual balsam, in perpetual readiness for realization and enjoyment. For example, few persons, and they but seldom, can actually roam amidst the stately piles of feudal architecture, listen to the reduplicated notes of mellow horns dying away among distant glens and rocks, and call up the magic tales and sights of fairy lore in their native localities. But when Tennyson sets it all in his compressing verse, any one, simply by repeating the lines, may, whenever he pleases, surround himself with the entrancement of the romantic scenery and the legendary sounds.

“ The splendor falls on castle walls,
And snowy summits old in story ;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying ;
Blow, bugle : answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.”

“ O hark ! O hear ! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going ;
O sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying ;
Blow, bugle : answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.”

Poetry condenses the great provinces of the material creation, history, fancy, passion, philosophy, into portable forms, and presents them to her disciples. Borne about in memory, they weigh nothing, and occupy no space, yet are ever ready, at the slightest summons, to leap up in the illuminated domain of fantasy into their proper magnitudes, and to exert their rightful influences. In the Scandinavian mythology, the inventive Dwarfs made for their friend Frey, the deity of sunshine and rain, a ship called *Skidbladmir*, which he could fold up in such diminutive compass as to carry it in his vest pocket,

or dilate to such enormous dimensions that the entire hosts of the gods, with all their arms and equipments, might embark on board of it, and have room to spare. A *word* is the reality of which this mythical ship is the symbol. A poetic word is the enchanted Skidbladmir, which, though carried unseen in a corner of the brain, or on the tip of the tongue, when expanded by imagination, may contain and float the universe. Who will measure the contents of such words as life, force, death, immortality, mystery? These are the magic vehicles in which the poet puts all the marvels of existence, all the wrestlings and triumphs of genius, and bestows them on his readers without money and without price.

Another essential office in the mission of poetry is to reveal to duller eyes and colder hearts the beauty and joyfulness of Nature, — so to unveil her attractions, voice her invitations, and illustrate her wholesome pleasures, as to redeem the hardened from their sullen seclusion, and restore the outcast from poverty and despair to their proper heritage in the open spectacle and banquet of the universe. Millions of men are so coarse and vulgar, or so absorbed and harassed, as to be quite insensible to the infinite loveliness and awe that crowd every nook of creation, the infinite sweetness and mystery that pervade every relationship of their existence. It is the happy privilege of the poet to be intensely alive to these divine realities; and it is his sacred commission to quicken others to the same exalted perceptions, — to make them tender, holy, peaceful, and joyous, by adopting them into his fellowship in the tenderness, holiness, peace, and joy of a pure communion with Nature. The poet is to other men a priest of the wonder and bloom of the world, which they see through his eyes, and feel through his heart, and so are healed and made glad.

“ For oh, is it you, is it you,
Moonlight, and shadow, and lake,
And mountains, that fill us with joy,
Or the Poet who sings you so well?
Is it you, O Beauty, O Grace,
O Charm, O Romance, that we feel,
Or the voice which reveals what you are?
Are ye, like daylight and sun,
Shared and rejoiced in by all?

Or are ye immersed in the mass
 Of matter, and hard to extract,
 Or sunk at the core of the world,
 Too deep for the most to discern ?
 Like stars in the deep of the sky,
 Which arise on the glass of the sage,
 But are lost when their watcher is gone ? ”

Arnold's Poems, p. 324.

Hardly any other lesson does poetry teach more frequently or more earnestly, hardly any other lesson is more needed and precious, than this,—the beauty of nature, the love of nature, the purifying, strengthening influences of communion with nature.

“ Under the leaves, amid the grass,
 Lazily the day shall pass,
 Yet not be wasted. Must I ever
 Climb up the hill-tops of Endeavor ?
 I hate you all, ye musty books !
 Ye know not how the morning looks, —
 Ye smell of studies long and keen ;
 I'll change the white leaves for the green !
 My Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope,
 I'll leave them for the grassy slope,
 Where other singers, sweet as they,
 Chant hymn and song and roundelay.
 What do I care for Kant or Hegel,
 For Leibnitz, Newton, Locke, or Schlegel ?
 Did they exhaust philosophy ?
 I'll find it in the earth or sky,
 In woodbine wreaths, in ears of corn,
 In flickering shadows of the morn ;
 And if I gather nothing new,
 At least I'll keep my spirits true,
 And bathe my heart in honey-dew.”

Never, we believe, has this lesson of nature been taught by any other poet with such inexhaustible truth and pervasive power, as by Wordsworth.

“ He, too, upon a wintry clime
 Had fallen, — on this iron time
 Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
 He found us when the age had bound
 Our souls in its benumbing round ;
 He spoke, and loosed our hearts in tears.

He laid us, as we lay at birth,
 On the cool, flowery lap of earth ;
 Smiles broke from us, and we had ease.
 The hills were round us, and the breeze
 Went o'er the sun-lit fields again ;
 Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
 Our youth returned : for there was shed
 On spirits that had long been dead,
 Spirits dried up and closely furled,
 The freshness of the early world."

Arnold's Poems, pp. 269, 270.

Furthermore, the poet is eminently an emancipator of men. It is one of his choicest functions to thrill imprisoned souls with the notes of liberty, to open their cages of care, and to set them free in the cosmopolitan liberty of love and truth. By his comprehensive sympathy, his power of reproducing all things in contemplative and emotional imagination, and his gift of imparting this experience to others, he takes us out of mere self, tears off the veils and husks of bigotry and stupidity, expands us beyond the limits of egotism, makes us live in the whole life of humanity. Burns, walking once with Dugald Stewart on the hills near Edinburgh, and looking over the villages spread beneath, said that the sight of so many cottages gave him a pleasure which no one could understand who did not know as he did how much of real worth and happiness such poor dwellings contained. It is the poet alone who can truly say, "As a man, I feel an interest in everything human."

"The Poet, to whose mighty heart
 Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
 Subdues that energy to scan,
 Not his own course, but that of Man."

"He sees in some great historied land
 A ruler of the people stand ;
 Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
 Roll through the heaving multitude ;
 Exults, yet for no moment's space
 Enavies the all-regarded place."

"He, mingled with the crowd,
 Is in their far-off triumphs proud.
 From some high station he looks down,
 At sunset, on a populous town ;

Surveys each happy group that fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets,
Each with some errand of its own ; —
And does not say, *I am alone.*”

Arnold's Poems, pp. 294, 295.

This sympathetic, reproductive, universalizing spirit of poetry makes it a missionary of that religion whose essence is breathed in the twin commandments, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,” and “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Poetry, we must say, in addition, is intrusted with a general apostleship of virtue and philanthropy, charged to portray the commanding charms of justice, faith, love, and magnanimity. The poet, by his very temperament and gifts, is a believer, a lover, an enjoyer. He is too highly endowed with the blessed prerogatives of insight and fruition to be a victim of the petty distrusts, envies, hatreds, and morosenesses which afflict the souls of so many, imbittering their cup of experience from its foam to its dregs. Consequently, his singing tends to cheer and sweeten all existence, flinging light and music abroad, beautifully reflecting everywhere in the mirrors of its thoughts and sentiments whatever things are real, fair, good, blissful, everlasting. The poet, being the natural organ of truth and beauty, virtue and joy, can hardly so belie his nature, and invert his mission, as to become the organ of meanness and falsehood, of hatred and vice, or so untune himself as to sing the praises of deformity and misery. It is the over-feeling of things lovely and beneficent, of emotions pure and true, of hopes and visions magnanimous and divine, that produces the genial yearning which makes us cling to them, fondle them, and strive to preserve them by turning their expression into harmonious verse. The over-feeling of suspicion, malice, and other like experiences, usually works itself off in gall, and plots, and deeds, and not in any literary products, — least of all, in poetry, which requires serenity of joy amidst excitement of expression. The poet, accordingly, is a teacher of religious morality ; that is, a nourisher of all sacred sympathies. No ignoble jealousy contracts, but an overflowing generosity of emotion expands, his soul, as he

turns to his fellow-men and strikes his lyre to the spontaneous notes of righteousness and blessedness. Infusing the credulous fulness of his own loving heart into all things, refusing to believe that even the most depraved of men is beyond the restoring power of sympathy, he tells us that, as every block of marble in the mine contains the form of a god robed in light, only needing the lofty thought and skilful fingers to call it forth to captivate the world,—

“ So in the hardest human heart
One little well appears,
A fountain in some hidden part,
That brims with gentle tears ;
It only needs the master-touch
Of Love’s or Pity’s hand,
And lo ! the rock in crystal melts,
And gushes o’er the land.”

In a world so filled and set on fire with jostling rivalries as modern society is, the most prevalent weakness, sin, and misery can hardly fail to be egotistic jealousy. That fault is rebuked by every true strain of poetry from first to last. Who will not derive both pleasure and benefit from the lesson of disinterested sentiment embodied in the following generous verses ?

“ Lend me thine eyes, Posterity ! A cloud
Gathers between my vision and the men
Whose voices echo o’er this breathing world.
Lend me thy sight, — lend me thy placid soul,
Free from this mean contemporaneous scorn,
That I may know what mighty spirits walk
Daily and hourly in my company,
Or jostle shoulders in the common crowd,
The thinkers and the workers of the Time.
I’m sick of Apathy, Contempt, and Hate,
And all the blinding dust which envy stirs,
To shroud the living lustre from our sight.
Lend me thine eyes, grateful Posterity !
Upon the hill-tops I would stand alone,
Companion of the vastness, and keep watch
Upon the giants passing to and fro,
Small to the dwellers in the vales beneath,
But great to me. O just Posterity !
I strive to penetrate thy thought ; to soar
Beyond the narrow precincts of To-day,

And judge what men now wanting crusts of bread
Shall in thy book stand foremost with the crowned ;
What scorned and persecuted guide of thought
Shall shine, the jewel on a nation's brow ;
And what unfriended genius, jeered at now,
Shall fill the largest niche of Pantheons.
I would behold, daily, for my delight,
The clear side of the greatness, the full size,
Shape, glory, majesty, of living men.
Why should our envy dim the orbs of heaven ?
Why should our malice dwarf the giant's height, —
Our scorn make black the white robe of the sage ? ”

Another and a central feature in the mission of poetry is consolation. Among the uses of verse, this scarcely deserves a subordinate place ; but we have space left only to give it a hurried illustration. The poet is a consoler, first, because, from the fineness or susceptibleness of his organization, he is the most profoundly experienced and the most tenderly sympathizing of men ; secondly, because, by virtue of the same fact, he stands in the most open and comprehensive relations to the eternal sources of truth, good, beauty, and joy ; and, thirdly, because attention on our part to a measured and musical expression of feeling tends, by the innate laws of our constitution, to soothe and reduce the wild outbreaks of rage or wretchedness into limit and proportion, and to attune the discordant irregularities of excessive passion into a subsiding and governable harmony. The melodious symmetry and flow of gentle verse seize the harsh, jarring effects of distress and terror by a sympathetic influence, fascinate them, subdue their lacerating impulses into unison with its own ordered movement. When the sweet singer of Israel played on his harp before Saul, the evil spirit left him. We have known a minister to go into a room full of mourners who were frantically weeping and wailing, and as he said, in soft, low tones, “ The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want : he maketh me to lie down in green pastures ; he leadeth me beside the still waters ; he restoreth my soul,” — in a moment the convulsions ceased, and every sound was hushed. Sad and tender poetry may often make us weep ; but the tears we then shed are not smitten forth by cruel shocks, nor wrung out in scald-

ing bitterness. They are pleasing tears, that *relieve* in flowing, and *heal* as they flow.

“ As a twig trembles, which a bird
Lights on to sing, then leaves unbent,
So is my memory thrilled and stirred : —
I only know she came and went.

“ As clasps some lake, by gusts unriven,
The blue dome’s measureless content,
So my soul held that moment’s heaven : —
I only know she came and went.

“ As at one bound our swift Spring heaps
The orchards full of bloom and scent,
So clove her May my wintry sleeps : —
I only know she came and went.

“ An angel stood and met my gaze,
Through the low doorway of my tent ;
The tent is struck, the vision stays : —
I only know she came and went.

“ O, when the room grows slowly dim,
And life’s last oil is nearly spent,
One gush of light these eyes will brim,
Only to think she came and went.”

The last and crowning use of poetry is to impart inspiration to an often burdened existence, and to serve as the bright and blissful complement to a sometimes dark and defective world. Poetry is own sister of Religion. In their ideal but experimental domains we find refuge, solace, exhaustless riches, when the facts of our lot are cold, hard, and painful. Entering the enchanted realm and the divine fellowship of the poets and saints, we leave, forgotten, behind us, exuding hate, repulsive difficulties, aching disappointment, and despair. Far beyond our gloomy environment of foes, fears, sorrows, and harsher hardships, we half find, half create, a better sphere, and reign there, as happy kings, within our world of thought. In the wedded rapture and serenity of imaginative faith and love, adventure and fruition, we no more think of the storm of poverty, toil, and wretchedness we have forsaken, than an eagle sailing on exultant wing in the upper sunlight of heaven heeds “ where his silent shadow skims the rocks below.” This

sublime prerogative the poet shows us how to appropriate ; and no more sacred office can now be performed by man for his fellow-man. When depressed and faltering, we know instinctively where to turn for comfort and strength, — to the strains of the mighty poets surcharged with irradiant vitality, pulsating with immortal power. Worn, weary, and old, from the battling cares of our days, we renew ourselves with literary nectar and ambrosia ; we have recourse to those

“ Olympian bards who sung
Divine ideas below,” —

ideas which, if they do not always “*find* us young,” at least are always able to *make* us so. Among men, then, the poet is pre-eminently the inspirer.

We have now living in America an author whose pages abound in tonic utterances of wondrous reach and lofty cheer. On the fly-leaf of a volume of this author’s *Essays* were written the following lines, full of that electric contagion, that condensed and exuberant enthusiasm, which is equally the poet’s birthright and his achievement. They show the inspired and inspiring character of the poet in striking contrast with the sceptical or torpid mood of the mass of mankind.

“ O monstrous, dead, unprofitable world,
That thou canst hear, and, hearing, hold thy way.
A voice oracular hath pealed to-day,
To-day a hero’s banner is unfurled.
Hast thou no lip for welcome ? So I said.
Man after man, the world smiled, and passed by :
A smile of wistful incredulity,
As though one spake of noise unto the dead ;
Scornful, and strange, and sorrowful, and full
Of bitter knowledge. Yet the Will is free ;
Strong is the Soul, and wise, and beautiful ;
The seeds of God-like power are in us still ;
Gods are we, Bards, Saints, Heroes, if we will.
Dumb judges, answer — truth ? or mockery ? ”

Arnold’s Poems, p. 174.

Yes, the poet is forever the inspirer ; and *that* is the transcendent use of his singing, — to fill us with faith, strength, and cheer, when in the desert of life we faint and stagger. The war-songs of Tyrtæus thrilled the Spartan ranks with resolve

as the bursts of morning sunshine lift a field of drooping flowers. Sir Philip Sidney says, "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet." The time when poetry was used to incite men to charge upon death in the blazing ranks of battle, and to trample their bleeding brothers down, is fast going by. But when it is quite gone, the mission of heroic verse will not be ended. It will then win its highest triumphs, in singing the more splendid sacrifices of peace, and the more god-like victories of philanthropy. Its martial strains will then fire the hearts and swell the bosoms of generous men to march in the phalanx of reform to the conquest of universal truth, freedom, and good.

ART. VIII. — *The Law of Freedom and Bondage in the United States.* By JOHN CODMAN HURD, Counsellor at Law. In two volumes. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.; New York: D. Van Nostrand. 8vo. pp. 617, 800.

THIS is a remarkable work, not only for thorough research, wide range of investigation, exhausting discussion, and general ability, but for the singularly unimpassioned tone in which it treats of the most exciting topic of the age. Slavery takes the strongest hold alike upon the moral senses and the sympathetic emotions of mankind. The unwarped and unperverted conscience pronounces it a gigantic injustice, and the heart of humanity is sorely pained by the sufferings which flow from it, however fully the understanding may recognize the practical difficulties which lie in the way of removing it, or however faithfully the reflecting patriot may respect the constitutional defences which have been thrown around it. No one can wonder that those in whom the sympathetic and emotional elements are predominant should see nothing in slavery but the fact of its existence, should acknowledge no limits to the responsibility which it imposes upon freemen to labor for its removal, and should take no heed of the obstacles